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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/851,791	05/09/2001	Hiroshi Kutsumi	MTS-3257US	3296

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EXAMINER

POND, ROBERT M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3625

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/08/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/851,791

Applicant(s)

KUTSUMI ET AL.

Examiner

Robert M. Pond

Art Unit

3625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,9,11-39,48,49 and 51-74 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-4,9,11-27 and 29-39 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 28,48,49,52-54 and 56-74 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 51 and 55 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection.

Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114.

Applicant's submission filed on 24 November 2006 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

The Applicant amended claims 28, 48, 51, 55, and 74. All pending claims (28, 48, 49, and 51-74) were examined in this non-final office action.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, see Remarks, filed 24 November 2006, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 28, 48, 49, and 51-74 under 35 USC 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Nakayama and Petras. Official Notice is withdrawn. Arguments hinging on the Examiner's taking of Official Notice are moot. Amended claim language and responses to the Applicant's arguments may be found below.

Allowable Subject Matter

- 1. Claims 51 and 55 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.**

The Examiner is suggesting the Applicant consider a telephone interview for further discussion pertaining to these claims prior to filing a response.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

- 2. Claims 28, 48, 49, 52-54, and 56-74 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakayama (Paper #20051019, US 6,339,774) in view of Petras (US 7,143,089, previously published as US 2001/0047290 cited in Paper #20060523).**

Nakayama teaches an information sharing system and method adapted to determining the degree of contribution of a specific user to the system on the basis of the frequency of access and the contents of the retrieved by the user and feeding it back to the user in order to give an incentive to the user to further the utilization of information (see at least col. 1, line 52-57). Nakayama teaches

users disclosing content for information sharing by using the content registration to submit content to a content database (see at least Fig. 91 (9104, 9108); Figs. 92-98). Nakayama teaches rewarding users with positive incentives for registering content based on frequency, accessing content, making evaluations, and submitting questions, and further Nakayama further teaches penalizing a user for not making a positive contribution (please note: system recognizes that user "Akoi" as receiving zero points for information registration and user "Yamada" negative points for evaluations) (see at least Fig. 124). Nakayama further teaches:

- Recommended contents are output by output means: user submits search terms or query to receive content recommendations consistent with search terms (see at least Figs. 5A and 5B).
- Checking access history of the user: stores accumulated history of access and content registration (Fig. 124).
- Number of registration times: track frequency of registration (see at least Fig. 124 (REGISTRATION); col. 57, lines 32-38).
- Content registration: user registers content (see at least Fig. 91 (9104, 9108); Figs. 92-98).
- History: stores user information references and information utilization and associates with (see at least Fig. 77A (reference history); col. 43, lines 1-9).

- Recommendation: returns search content, provides evaluations as being recommendable.
- Extraction means: (see at least col. 24, lines 56-63).
- Content: please note: content can pertain to any topic (not limited to business use).

Nakayama teaches all the above as noted under the 103(a) rejection and teaches a) the importance of populating the information sharing system with user content, b) users receiving positive incentives for frequency of registering content and frequency of accessing content in an online information sharing system, and c) providing zero incentives when content is not registered, but does not earning access to additional content based on one's content contribution to the service. On the other hand, Petras teaches users contributing content via a system that creates and maintains a database of information utilizing user opinions about subjects, particularly exceptional experiences and that users' access is not restricted to the information unless it is a fee-based subscription site (see at least col. 5, lines 31-36). Petras teaches a feature of the invention is to attract users and develop user loyalty through personal involvement and content contribution by way of the use of a personal journal and participation in the rewards of the success of the web site. The system provides a way to compensate contributors and guests for their efforts in a manner that ensures a dynamic, comprehensive and accurate database of information for use by guests to the Web site (see at least B35). Petras teaches contributors earning reward points, and further

teaches a guest earning points in the guest pool of earned points, or earning additional access to database content for his/her contributions of ratings, comments, opinions, etc (i.e. receiving access to content based on contributing content) (see at least col. 19, lines 5-9). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at time of the invention to modify the system and method of Nakayama to base rewards for contributing content to the service by earning additional access to content as taught by Petras, in order to encourage user contributions and use of the database service. One of ordinary skill in the art would ascertain the value of granting access to additional content in lieu of charging for access to additional content under a fee-based subscription model.

Nakayama teaches all the above as noted under the 103(a) rejection but does not disclose wherein the one user's received recommended contents are in number at least greater than the number of times the one user carried out content registration. Petras teaches all the above as noted under the 103(a) rejection and further teaches users earning bonus points or earning three times the points based on perceived value of the user's contribution to the service (see at least col. 53, lines 46 through col. 54, line 48). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at time of the invention to modify the system and method of Nakayama to reward a user more than would typically be rewarded based on performance or perceived value as taught by Petras, in order to encourage user contributions and use of the database service. One of ordinary skill in the art would ascertain that allowing a guest to access additional content

could be based on the same principle as for other users and thereby allowing the guest to access more content than contributed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert M. Pond whose telephone number is 571-272-6760. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Jeff Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Robert M. Pond
Primary Examiner
January 31, 2007